

- Sub 27
25. (New) The well screen cover of claim 17, wherein the channel defines sidewalls having upper portions welded to an inner surface of the perforated tube.
26. (New) The well screen cover of claim 17, further comprising at least one support ring disposed along the periphery of an inside surface of the perforated tube.
27. (New) The well screen cover of claim 26, wherein the at least one support ring is configured to support the channel and the perforated tube.
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28. (New) The well screen cover of claim 18, wherein the channel is formed to house a fiber optic cable.
29. (New) The well screen cover of claim 28, wherein the channel comprises an open surface facing radially outward.
30. (New) A well screen cover, comprising:
a tube having a plurality of perforations disposed therethrough; and
a channel formed on an outer surface of the tube and substantially along the length of the tube, wherein the channel is made from the same material as the tube.

REMARKS

This is intended as a full and complete response to the Office Action dated April 25, 2003, having a shortened statutory period for response set to expire on July 25, 2003. Claims 11-16 are withdrawn from consideration as being drawn to a nonelected invention. Claim 4 has been amended to change its dependency from claim 1 to claim 17. New claims 17-30 have been added to more clearly recite aspects of the invention. Applicants believe no new matter has been introduced by the amendment and the new claims presented herein. The amendment and the new claims have been made in a good faith effort to advance prosecution on the merits. Claims 1-3 and 5-16

have been cancelled without prejudice. Applicants reserve the right to subsequently take up prosecution of the claims as originally filed in this application in a continuation, a continuation-in-part and/or a divisional application. Please reconsider the claims pending in the application for reasons discussed below.

Claims 5 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph. More specifically, the Examiner takes the position that the specification lacks support for the limitation of "press fit" recited in claim 5 and the limitation of "formed to produce a press fit between the fiber optic cable and the channel" recited in claim 10. Claims 5 and 10 have been cancelled without prejudice, thereby rendering the rejection moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 4-6, 9, and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Publication No. 2002/0092649 ("*Bixenman*"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. *Bixenman* was filed on February 20, 2002 and Applicants' case was filed on December 21, 2001. Since *Bixenman* was filed after Applicants' filing date, *Bixenman* is not a valid 102 reference. Accordingly, the rejection under 102 over *Bixenman* is improper. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 2, 3, 7, and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Publication No. 2002/0092649 (*Bixenman*) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,979,551 (*Uban*). Since *Bixenman* is not a proper 102 reference, the rejection is improper. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

With regard to new claims 17-30, Applicants submit that claims 17-30 recite subject matter that is neither disclosed, taught, nor otherwise suggested by the cited references, and as such, allowance of these claims is respectfully requested.

In conclusion, the references cited by the Examiner, neither alone nor in combination, teach, show, or suggest the claimed method or apparatus. Having addressed all issues set out in the office action, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully request that the claims be allowed.

The prior art made of record is noted. However, it is believed that the secondary references are no more pertinent to the Applicants' disclosure than the primary references cited in the office action. Therefore, it is believed that a detailed discussion

of the secondary references is not deemed necessary for a full and complete response to this office action. Accordingly, allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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